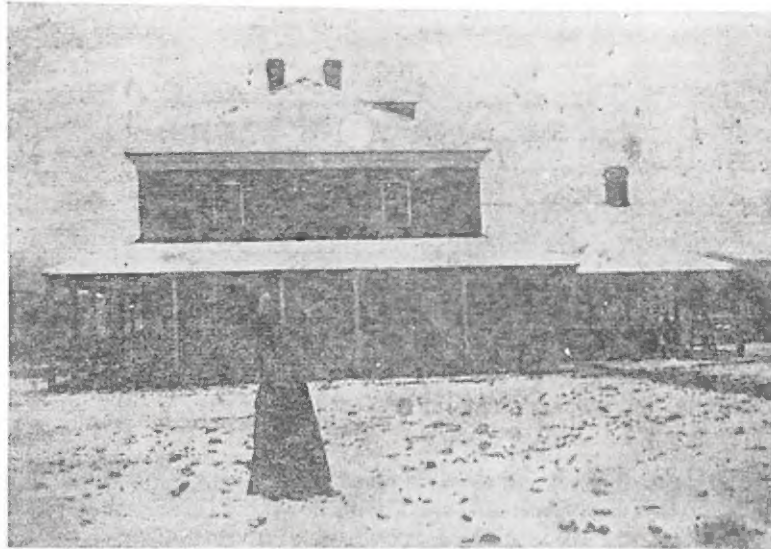


Such is the story of the Pioneer home of my grandfather Charles Richins. The story was told to me by my Aunt Hannah Stephens, oldest daughter of Esther; the Hannah of the washboard and wooden tubs, who has since passed away, and by my father, Parley T. Richins, who is now in his 83rd year. Other people who were born and raised in the little settlement of Henneferville, now known as Henefer, also contributed to this story.



The Big House

Weber Station
Echo

THE MAIL COMES THROUGH

*O'er mountain steep and gullies deep,
O'er desert with its trackless sands,
In blinding storms or stifling heat,
The mail was brought from distant lands.*

The first mail to arrive in Utah after the first settlers of 1847 had arrived was brought by a Mormon company of 100, led by Daniel Spencer, which ended the long journey to Salt Lake City in Sept. 1847. The mail and the first large company to follow Brigham Young's advance party to the valley, came in covered wagons drawn by oxen on Sept. 23, 1847. The first mail from the original company of pioneers to their friends and relatives in the east was carried to them by Mr. Charles Beaumont, a French trader. Mr. Beaumont willingly agreed to carry the letters; and more than 50 were sent by him to Carpy's Point, near Council Bluffs. In appreciation for his kindness, he was given bread, sugar, meat and other supplies. Several of the pioneers traded with him for buffalo robes.

The postoffice nearest Henefer at that time was at Echo, Utah. Two of the first mail carriers were Thomas Walker and John Toone. They lived in Croyden, and made two or three trips a week to get the mail for Henefer and Croyden. Other mail carriers were James Paskett, Williams Richins, John Shill, John Francis, James Lythgoe, William T. Hennefer and Jobe Ovard. The first postoffice was established in Henefer in 1867. Joseph Foster was Postmaster, he was followed by William Bond. The postoffice was in the Bond's General Store. At the age of 15 years, Joseph W. Bond carried the U. S. Mail by horseback, from Heber City to Henefer. He slept over night in Henefer and then traveled on to Ogden, Utah, there staying overnight, and back to Henefer, 180 miles round trip.

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Mail was first carried once a week and then twice a week. The nearest station was Echo. The mail was picked up by the Pony Express at the old Stage Coach Station at the mouth of Echo Canyon. The young ladies would oftentimes walk to Echo to post their love letters. In May 1869, the railroad was completed through Echo and down Weber Canyon, the track passing near the Henefer settlement on the east side of the Weber River about one half mile. Brigham Young had contracted to build the seventy-six miles of the railroad from Echo down Weber Canyon. This project furnished work for many of the people of Henefer. Then the mail came by train.

The Pony Express as a means of communication between the East and West coasts, was established by the firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell. The first rider left Missouri Apr. 3, 1860. He delivered the mail in San Francisco ten days later. This service was maintained weekly from that time, mainly for the benefit of government officials, merchants, and traders. Letter mail only, was carried, at a fee of \$5.00 a letter, paid in advance. Hundreds of letters were carried at a time, but the bundle of precious mail made a packet no larger than an ordinary writing tablet, since they were written on the thinnest paper available. The horses used were the best that money could buy, ranging from tough mustangs to thoroughbred stock from the state of Iowa. The riders were chosen for their ability to handle spirited horses, and endure the hardship of rigorous travel. Horses and rider, of necessity, traveled light. The combined weight of equipment could not exceed 14 pounds, and the mail could not exceed 20 pounds. The riders dressed as they saw fit. The usual attire was a buckskin shirt, trousers tucked into high boots and a slouch hat. He was allowed to carry a pair of revolvers and a sheath knife. These weapons were seldom used because it was a rule of the company that a rider never fight unless compelled to do so. The wages paid the riders ranged from \$50.00 to \$150.00 per month. The mail bags were light leather pouches, divided into four compartments, which were kept locked.

Employees, station keepers and riders alike, were under oath to perform their duty. The oath read as follows: "—, do hereby swear, before the Great and Living God that during my engagement, and while I am an employec of Russell, Majors and Waddell, I will under no circumstances, use profane language; that I will drink no intoxicating liquors; that I will not quarrel or fight with any other employee of the firm, and that in every respect, I will conduct myself honestly, be faithful to my duties, and so direct all my acts so as to win the confidence of my employers. So help me God."

The mail stations were located 10 or 15 miles apart, with water always near by; each rider's division was not more than 75 miles. There were 5 Pony Express Stations located between Fort Bridger, Wyo. and Salt Lake City, Utah. Their trail followed the Mormon Pioneer trail exactly. They were, Castle Rock, Brimville, Weber, at the mouth

of Echo Canyon, Dixie Creek, and Mountain dell. Markers have been placed at the three stations between the Weber station and Salt Lake City. The duration of the Pony Express was only 16 months, but in that time the riders, with the help of loyal station keepers, traveled 650,000 miles. The following story of the Weber Stage and Pony Express Station, located at the mouth of Echo Canyon, was taken from "The Riders of the Pony Express," by Kate B. Carter.

Weber Stage and Pony Express Station—In the summer of 1853, the first stone was placed for the building which was later to become famous as the Weber Stage and Pony Express Station. Its twenty-six inch walls were considered unsafe in 1931, and the old building was removed, but in the five pockets that were discovered built in the walls were uncovered a \$5 gold piece dated 1847, a few pieces of small change, an old letter from a son and daughter to their "Dear Parents," dated 1873, a pair of gold glasses, a light-weight pony express rider's gun case and a parchment such as the Pony Express mail first used, written from an eastern girl to her pony express rider sweetheart, which today is clear and legible.

The late James E. Bromley, who came to Utah in July, 1854, and settled at the mouth of Echo Canyon, was placed in charge of the monthly mail, driving a mail coach and six mules, with changes at Laramie, Kearney and Bridger. He remained with the Overland Stage Company until 1856, when the mail was taken off between Independence and Salt Lake City.

In the spring of 1857, Mr. Bromley went to work for J. M. Hockaday who had been to Washington and had the mail route restored between Atchison and Salt Lake City. He says: "I was put in charge of the road; I bought mules, built stations, fought Indians and did everything that came in the line of my duty. I started from Atchison, and as I got one division in order, I was sent to the next, until, finally, I was permanently located on the Salt Lake division; having charge of the road from Pacific Springs to Salt Lake City, until the spring of 1864. In 1860, the Pony Express was put on. I bought the horses in Salt Lake, to stock the line to Fort Laramie, and hired many of Utah's young men to ride them. Nobly and well did they do their work."

In the journal of Albert Tracy, a member of Johnston's Army, he records: "April 7, 1860—We were enabled to reach by about five in the evening, the station established at the mouth of Echo Canyon. Thus it happens, that these stations have been recently arranged with reference to what is called the 'Pony Express,' a system of relays, by which a light letter mail it to be borne across the continent from California, in a space of a week or ten days. Like the others, the station at the mouth of the great canyon is rudely constructed, but comfortable, as things go among the mountains; while cozy in his stall, and abiding the expected 'pony' from the west, stands a sleek, active looking Kentucky animal, only too eager to stretch his limbs

above the hills farther on. The rider and groom whom we find within the station seems no less nervous and impatient to get in motion than the horse. It is, indeed, the first attempt which is thus to be made across the country, and not a soul upon the line but deems his reputation and that of his employers—not to speak of the animals themselves—directly involved." On April 8, 1860, he also says, "Towards five o'clock the boys, to facilitate some changes they had to make, spurred on with the mules, to a station not far from Cache Cave, near the head of the Canyon—leaving me to pick up my way with more deliberate care. And I had become again absorbed with the scene about, when for the second time I was roused with a voice at rear. Not, however, this time as the voice of a friend, but foe. 'Eep E-ee-yeep! Yeek!' rang out in a succession of fierce articulations, what seemed indeed the yells of the Shoshone upon my track! It being known, too, that the Indians were becoming gradually hostile, with the growth of the grass, the idea impressed me with such force as to leave upon my mind little doubt that I was indeed followed by warriors—fierce and savage. I had, too, after somewhat of a race, selected my ground for a stand, and was about to throw myself upon the ground, behind the shelter of my pony, when my eye, for the first, caught fairly sight of my pursuer. It was Dave, the express boy, whom we had left at the mouth of the Canyon, and who, mounted upon his Kentucky racer, now bounded from point to point along the path behind, swinging aloft his free arm, and yelling, as it were the veritable Aborigine himself! Nor had I been alone deceived. For my conductors in advance catching also the yells, had, like the good boys they were, wheeled suddenly, and were now charging down from the opposite direction, to the rescue of the 'Captain.' Within a moment Kentucky came up, glorious with the free stretch afforded him, and sweeping past with no further recognition from his rider than the continued yells, was soon far up the canyon. Hurrying onward now ourselves, we soon greeted Dave at the station—a mere structure of slabs, to keep the wolves off—there Kentucky was to rest over, and another horse be taken. Dave laughed at our fears, but soon shifting his saddle, mail and all attached in a pocket, was away upon his quest."

Mark Twain and Jack Slade Entertain at Weber Stage Station—The razing of the old Weber stage station and the death of William Westcott, pioneer Overland Stage driver in Salt Lake City, marks two more victories for Father Time in his attempt to remove old historic landmarks, the daring Pony Express riders and Stage Coach drivers who carried the U. S. Mail across the plains.

Tom Riverton, a resident of Gering, Nebraska, was well acquainted with the stage route in the early sixties and especially so with the Weber Stage station. Telling of former friends among whom were Jim Bridger, Jim Baker, James P. Beckwourth, Brigham Young, Ezra Meeker and a list of famous war chiefs, who roamed the eastern states in the early sixties, he says:

Weber Pony Express Station



"Where Weber stage station was built, in the mouth of Echo Canyon is so narrow, in fact so narrow, that engineers are hard pressed to accommodate two lines of the Union Pacific and the two coast-to-coast highways which intersect at its mouth. In early days all travelers passed Weber station.

"A large tribe of Ute Indians camped near the station, but were never hostile to the whites. They joined in the merriment, giving war dances for the amusement of the old settlers and the terror of the tenderfoot. Many a visitor to the west experienced chills as braves danced and circled the station with knives and tomahawks waving, giving warwhoops that chilled the blood of more experienced westerners.

"The oldest pioneers living today in the vicinity of Weber station cannot remember who built the first building in this spot, which later was used as a relay station for stages and Pony Express.

"Tom Riverton, while talking to Jim Bridger, years ago was told that a log cabin was erected in 1847 by Weber, Smith, Brown, and himself on the ground where the old stone station was erected later. In 1848, Smith and Weber started another building that was the main building used by the stages and Pony Express is thought to have been built in 1853. The property was first owned by Russell, Majors and Waddell, however; it was called Weber Station.

"During one summer, Lottia Crabtree and her show troupe were detained at the station until a wheelwright could repair the stage which had been wrecked while rounding a curve in the canyon. The group which sat at the breakfast table, with them that morning were later to become famous in western history, and known as the West's most daring pioneers, long after the stage and Pony Express had completed their work and gave way to spinning drivers of railroad trains.

"Captain Jack Slade, Superintendent of the Overland Stage Line, sat at the head of the table smiling and telling of past experiences while an agent for the Overland Stage Company. Mark Twain sat at his left in stunned silence, as if unable to believe the good-natured and entertaining young man was the reputed killer whose name struck fear in the hearts of outlaws. When Lottia Crabtree passed her autograph album—which was a great fad in early sixties—the names registered in the album read: Jack Slade, Fort Sedgwick, Colorado, Superintendent, Overland Stages; W. A. Hub, stage driver, Fort Bridger, Wyoming Territory; Lew Mackelvane, horse wrangler, Weber Station, Utah; LeRoy Shacklebean, chief cook, Weber Station, Utah; Dan Snyderham, barn boss, Weber Station Utah; William Bellamy, wagonmaker and wheelwright, Fort Bridger, Wyoming Territory; Fiddler Smith, fur trapper, Fort Bridger, Wyoming Territory; Tom Brown, hunter and trapper, Fort Bridger, Wyoming Territory; Sa-Ca-Ja-Wea, basket weaver (this old Indian woman, then close to the century mark in years, was said to have been with the Lewis and Clark expedition); Ma-Se-Sa, Ute Chief. (The names of the Indians were written in the album

by Slade); Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens), traveling author, Carson City, Nevada; Andy Whitewood, traveler, Carson City, Nevada.

"After the show troupe's albums were signed, Whitewood gave a short talk on the gold camps. Mark Twain said it was the best talk he had heard on gold, writing it into a newspaper article, he forwarded it to a New York paper.

"Jack Slade, always a good entertainer, gave a humorous talk on the different people traveling over the Overland Stage route, during his term as superintendent. He told of the 'Play Killings,' which caused the green travelers to tremble with fear, often pulled off by stage drivers and wranglers for the traveler's benefit. Explaining that these 'Play Killings' were often written up afterwards as real, which caused eastern people to suppose that eight men out of ten were shot in the west each year.

"Mark Twain arose to the occasion, giving a reply to Slade's talk. Telling how passengers were carried over the Overland route, in the old leather spring rocking coaches. With his long hair waving, he gave so humorous an imitation of the lurching and bouncing accorded the passengers enroute, his listeners were thrown into a fit of laughter. Slade laughed the heartiest of all. As Twain's talk turned to good-natured jibes at the management, his audience cheered. The Ute Indians rubbed the tops of their heads, which in the language of the western Indians means, 'all crazy.'

"To change their minds, Slade asked Ma-Ce-Sa, the chief, to entertain the group with a war dance. After the braves tired of dancing, Lottia Crabtree sang the songs so dearly loved by men of the Old West, many tears glistened in the eyes of the hardened westerners. Silence settled over the group as the singing proceeded. The Indians, unable to understand the singing were silent, while white men bowed their heads to old songs, which brought boyhood memories to them after many hard years in the mountains.

"A rattle of bars dropping, brought the group to their feet as a mounted man leading a saddled pony raced east from the station to meet the incoming westbound express rider. As they met, the rider with the fresh mount turned and raced along side of the incoming pony and rider. The express rider was seen to reach over, snap two saddle bags behind the light saddle of the fresh mount, hand the wrangler a small package and giving a slight twist he was in the saddle of the fresh mount. With a wave of the hand he disappeared around the point, into the west, over a cut-off which was considered too narrow for the cumbersome stages, which must go miles around to reach Salt Lake City.

"Slade excused himself and in a few minutes was seen talking to three men that had ridden up from the south. The leader of the three men was recognized as Ike Potter, who held considerable influence over the red men. It was feared he was attempting to encourage a raid

on the settlements along the Weber River. He was later shot and killed at Coalville, Utah, while attempting to escape guards on the night of August 1, 1867.

"As Potter rode away, five men who had been watching from an old log building, went back to their card game that they had been carrying on for the past few days. Slade was the only person at the station that knew these five men were there. They were there for a purpose. The 'Racket Gang' was taking too heavy a toll on the company's money and he had been called in to stop it. Horses would disappear from the company's corrals, a sizeable reward would be posted and a few hours later the horses would be returned and the reward collected. There are a number of unmarked graves in Echo Canyon. No doubt, some of them hold the bodies of the 'Racket Gang' who found the Pony Express and stage horses a good source of income and walked into Slade's trap. The very few pioneers who remain that knew Slade, have nothing to say against him. He knew human nature and was well liked."

George Bromley, pioneer prospector and trapper, who was born at the Old Weber Station said: "The large number of killings blamed to Slade are, no doubt, fictional. Slade was not a killer at heart. However, he was dangerous in a gun fight, as he was a dead shot and had a steel nerve. I believe the large number of killings charged to him were, no doubt, victims of agents hired to guard property of the Overland Stage Company, hired by Slade and working under his orders."

Tom Riverton said: "Slade, although a walking arsenal, was always a gentlemen and a good entertainer."

—Dick Clayton

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

*Christ, the light of the world through the ages,
Is the truth and the life and the way,
The little brick church in our valley
Seemed to listen as we knelt to pray.*

Efficient functioning of the Church and its auxiliary organizations was most important during the early settlement of Henefer. Since the right to peaceful religious worship was the sole purpose of the Utah Pioneer trek westward, it was natural that all affairs of the settlement centered around the church. The Bishop was fondly known as the "Father" of the Ward. Upon his shoulders rested the responsibility for the welfare of all ward members, both spiritual and temporal. Besides taking care of the spiritual needs of the people, he, with the help of his faithful counselors, looked also to the need for shelter, food and clothing for new families as they moved into the valley. The Bishop's home often became the temporary home of many new families until they could become self sustaining. The Bishop was often called upon to perform the duties of judge and jury. There was no judicial government and all arguments over irrigation water, trespassing or what ever problems there might be (and there were many) all came to the attention of the Bishop to be solved for the best interest of all parties concerned. The lot of the Mormon Bishop is not an easy one. We firmly believe that the ten men who have been chosen to preside over the affairs of the Henefer Ward for a period of 97 years, have all been devoted, humble men of God, and have sought to fulfill their calling in a pleasing manner before their Father in Heaven.

As the Bishop is known as the Father of the Ward, so the Ward Relief Society president is known as the Mother, and she often be-